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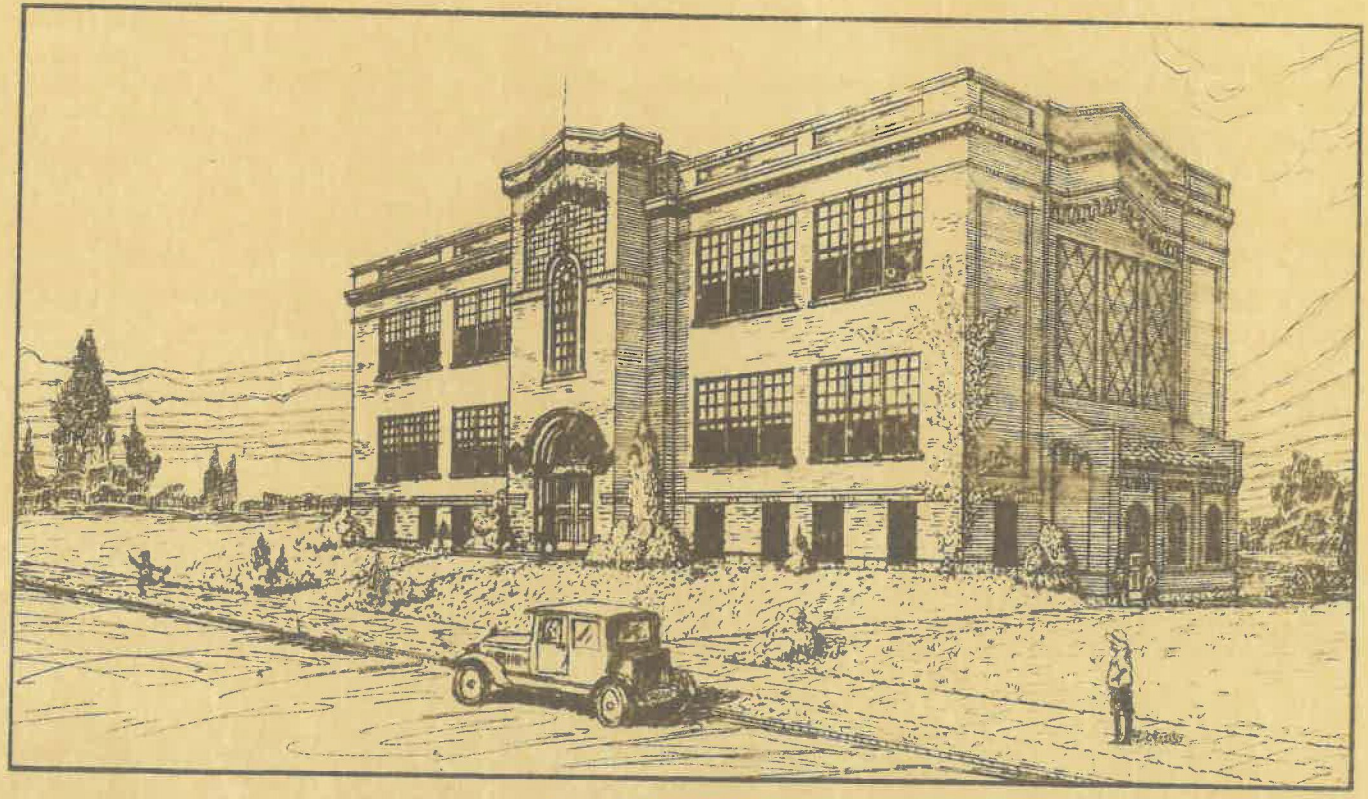

ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL

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Brief History of St. Anthony and Margaret Parish, Allouez, Superior, Wisconsin

IN 1913 the late Rt. Rev. Joseph M. Koudelka, Bishop of Superior, assisted by the Very Rev. Provincial Samuel Macke, O. F. M., secured a Franciscan Father. Rev. Rudolph Hanssens, from Belgium, to administer to the growing needs of the Belgian people residing in the vicinity of Allouez. Rev. Father Eustace Vollmer, O. F. M., who was pastor of St. Francis Xavier parish from 1882-1915, with his friendly ways and love for souls, had taken care of them. Surmounting many difficulties and with untiring zeal Rev. Father Rudolph began the arduous task of establishing the new parish. The parish limits of St. Francis which extended from Central Park to Itasca, now by reason of this new congregation ended with the Nemadji River.

The property, acquired and now owned by the Benjamin of the city parishes, comprises Block 45 on East Third Street and Block 46 on East Fourth Street, is the handsome gift of James Bardon and Emma Bardon, his wife. Five additional lots on Baltic Street were donated by Emma A. Corrigan, June 3, 1916. The congregation was incorporated in accordance with the laws of Wisconsin, August 24, 1914, under the title of SS. Anthony and Margarita.

In soliciting funds for the erection of the new church, Rev. Rudolph encountered many obstacles. The valiant priest, however, conquered them all. In a short time the burden was considered lightened and the financial condition of the parish, through the self-sacrificing labors of this Franciscan Father, was made entirely secure.

It was his desire to establish a parochial school. He shared with all Franciscan Fathers the conviction that there should be a Catholic school in every Catholic parish. His desires, however, were not realized on account of existing conditions. In 1917 he relinquished the pastorate of Allouez and transferred his endeavors to other fields of the Lord's Vineyard.

In the same year Rev. Francis Bertram, secretary to the late Rt. Rev. Bishop J. M. Koudelka, took temporary charge of

REV. RUDOLPH HANSSENS O. F. M.

REV FRANCIS BERTRAM

the congregation. His administration, distinguished by executive ability and thoroughness, soon won for him the hearts of the entire parish. The English speaking Catholics, who lived within the confines of the parish, with episcopal approval and under the guidance of Father Bertram in perfect harmony joined their forces to the achievements of the Belgians.

Working thus hand in hand, the congregation, comprising then about 400 souls, looked forward to a bright future when their hopes for a Catholic school and a resident pastor, who could give them his undivided attention would be realized.

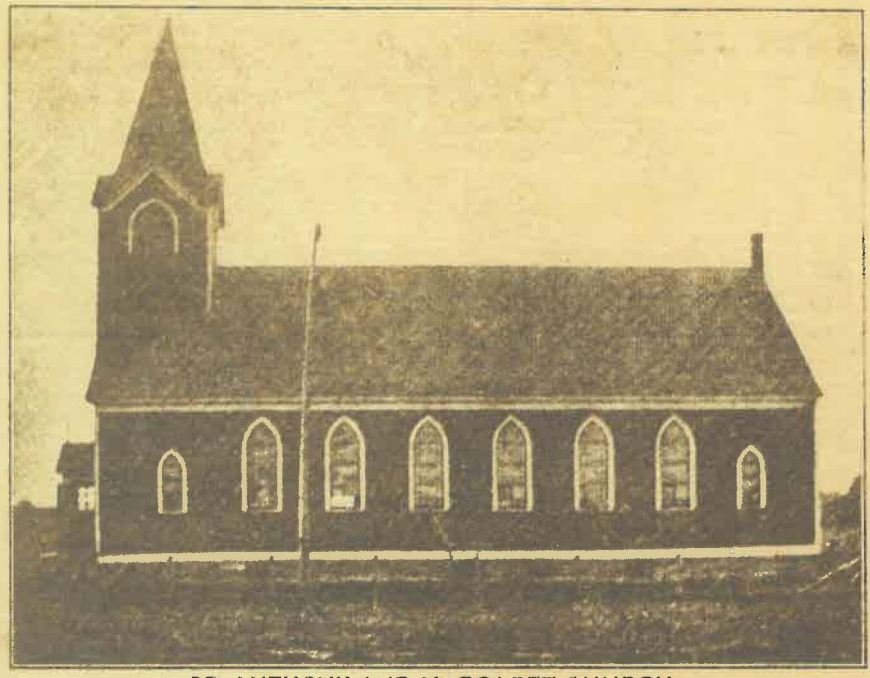
Father Bertram in the following year was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church of Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and the Rev. William J. Kubelbeck was placed in charge of the Allouez parish. The congregation was beginning to reap the fruits of the arduous labors of its founder, Father Rudolph, and the efficient administration of Father Bertram and thus it began to grow and flourish. Soon the parishioners raised sufficient funds to build a suitable residence for the priest and in the course of one year built and furnished the $8,000.00 Rectory. To realize their hearts' desire, the Parochial School, they contributed generously and raised over $6,000.00 in their first campaign. This fund in four years increased to over $12,000,00. At a meeting in the spring of 1925 the congregation gave their unanimous consent to the building of the school and cheerfully voted to expend the sum of $42.000.00 for the project. The parish thereby assumed a debt of $22,000.00. This burden, resting on willing shoulders, is a light and easy one, for the contributors, by their sacrifices and liberal donations, render it a work well worth the efforts expended.

The new eight room school was opened September 14th with an enrollment of 98 children in four grades. The remaining four grades will be added in 1926.

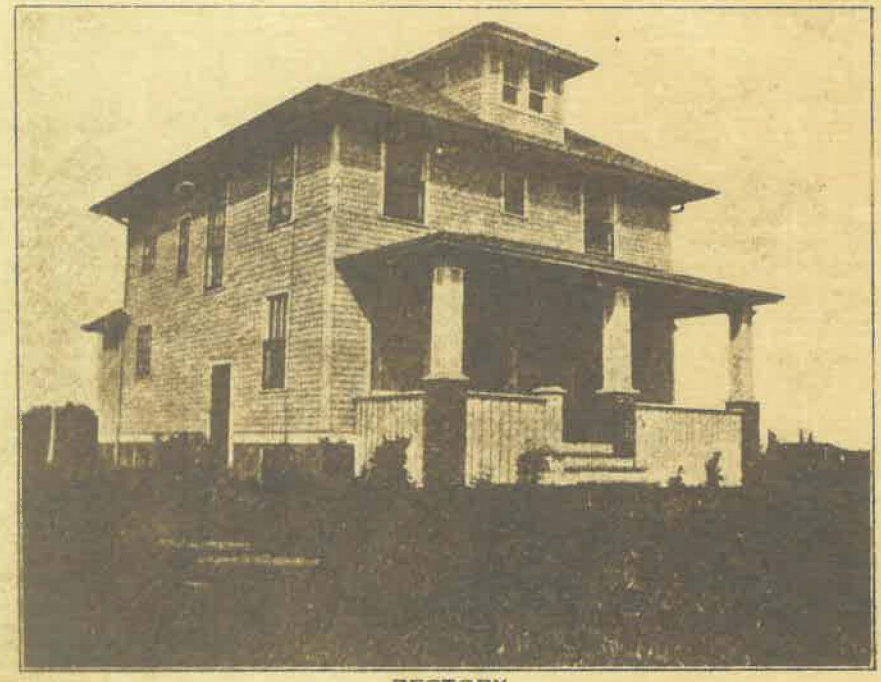
As teachers, the parish was fortunate in securing three Sisters of the Community of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and two rooms of the school have been temporarily set aside for them and fittingly furnished.

The parish may well be proud of their school which though modern in every way is the result of a true Christian spirit that never grows old in the hearts of the faithful. A spirit which since the dawn of Christianity has inspired the Church. Ever mindful of her divine commission "Go teach all nations," she gathers her children around her, feeling that the "one thing necessary"—Religion, not exclusive of others such as learning, ability and skill, is the supreme coordination principle in education as it is in life.

The new school was dedicated October 25th by the Rt. Rev. Joseph G. Pinten, under whose cheerful and guiding hand the building was erected. On this occasion the clergy of the city was present and the dedication sermon was delivered by the Rev. Francis Bertram.



SS. ANTHONY AND MARGARET CHURCH



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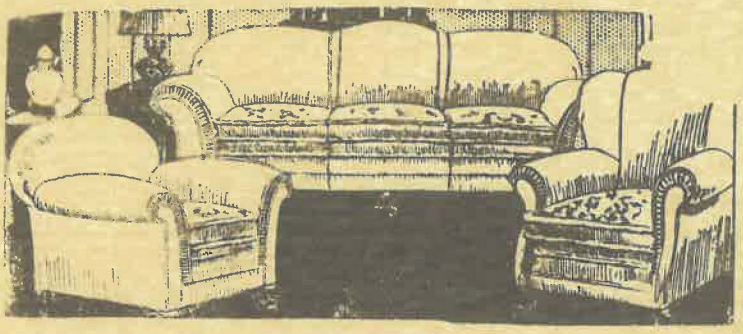

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